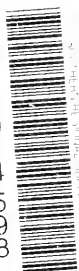


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HOW THANKFUL SHOULD WE BE.

COMMENTS ON NATAL.

BY

E. NEUMANN THOMAS.

CAPE TOWN:

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1894.

TO MY DEAR MOTHER, ———

AND

MY GRANDFATHER, THE REV. ROBERT DAVIES THOMAS,
CHRISTCHURCH, CHESTER.

WITH MY LOVE.

P R E F A C E.

THE following papers were not intended originally to appear as they now do in connected form, but E. and F., Daughter and Father, I desire to explain for the satisfaction of those who have puzzled themselves unnecessarily about the initials adopted, suddenly took it into their heads that as both required change and rest from their labours and Natal was a terra incognita to both, they would visit it together. Their thoughts, impressions, and experiences they venture to think may interest, and be of service to, some few whose steps may trend Natalwards.

I humbly apologize to our Readers for F.'s interpolations, which a candid and competent critic characterized as somewhat *de trop* (he was a ladies' man though) but throw the blame on E., just as Adam of old did. She beguiled me and I did write.

F

1.—DURBAN AND THE BEREA.

2.—MARITZBURG.

3.—ROUND ABOUT MARITZBURG—IN THE PARK—THE UMGENTI FALLS—
THE ASYLUM.

4.—THE TRAPPIST MONASTERY AT MARIANNHILL.

5.—ROUND ABOUT DURBAN—MOUNT EDGECUMBE AND BELLAIR

1.—DURBAN AND THE BEREA.

In the afternoon we came unto a land
In which it seemed always afternoon.
All round the coast the languid air did swoon,
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.

—*The Lotos-Eaters.*

This is *not* an advertisement for Seigel's syrup, so, reader, peruse with comfort. "How thankful should we be," was a little sister's favourite saying, and she often used it with a quaint mixture of fun and gravity to rebuke grumblers. We quoted the virtuous remark so often during our brief visit to Natal that it seemed the most appropriate title to adopt for a description of our experiences. "How thankful should we be!" we earnestly exclaimed when, after broiling on the deck of the Trojan, being hoisted in a basket, and tossing on the bar, we landed on the Durban wharf. (F. asks to be allowed to put in a word for the Trojan. "A charming, comfortable, substantial old ship she is, with her spacious cabins and deck-room. For making a voyage for health's sake, give me one of her type to do it in. Luxury enough for any but Lord Randolphs, no taxing of the brain in thinking about where your cabin is, and which is the shortest way to it among the maze of routes aboard our Scots and Dunottars, even after you have been at sea for a week or more and may be supposed to have mastered the geographical details of the complicated machines we travel in. No difficulty in finding a corner for your chair, and your chums, where you can lounge in peace, and snooze, if so inclined, without waking up to the fact that your cap is gone, you have got neuralgia in the face, or are chilled to the bone by sitting in an artificial gale of wind created by the driving of the ship through the water at eighteen or twenty miles an hour.")

We should add, however, that extensive harbour works are in course of construction, and even the present wharf and tugs are infinitely superior to the "temporary" landing arrangements at the metropolis of the East, arrangements which have been *temporary* ever since Port Elizabeth "was," and seem likely to continue so. The shimmering heat at the Point was intense, and we were glad to take refuge in the cool airy hall at the Alexandra Hotel. The palms and Hindoo servants clad in snowy tunics and turbans, looked delightfully tropical. Indians are universally employed in the Durban hotels and in many private houses. As a rule they make excellent servants, though

they are rather tiresomely attentive, and their curiosity is insatiable. (F. reminds me of "another good trait they have, and that is, they are satisfied with moderate tips and they do not in their waiting on you make you feel that they are gauging your liberality and apportioning the amount of attention they will bestow on you.") Ti, the Indian maid, was quite a "character." She took a keen interest in the fashions, and rather an unwelcome interest in "leetle Missy's" belongings. The Indian coolie girls wear short skirts and loose jackets, a long scarf of white muslin or bright coloured silk is draped across the shoulders and over the skirt, falling in graceful folds. They are plentifully bedecked with jewellery, "rings on their fingers and bells on their toes," massive earrings, noserings, &c. Indeed, an Indian girl carries all her fortune on her person, the features being often quite distorted with the weight of ornaments. I was quite fascinated with a coolie girl decked with magnificent silver jewellery; woven frostwork gleamed in her dark hair, massive chains were wound about her neck and arms, her ankles were so laden with silver that she walked with difficulty, and of course the earrings and noserings were hideous. Ti, however, contemptuously remarked that the silvery damsel didn't amount to much, as Indian women of any consequence always wore gold.

Next morning we began to explore Durban. There was very little difficulty in getting about, open trams leaving the Point for the Town-hall every quarter of an hour, and going from there to all parts of the Berea. West-street is the principal thoroughfare of Durban, and in many respects it is superior to Adderley-street, being much wider and better paved. There are several fine buildings, including a large Town-hall, containing post and telegraph offices, &c. *That* we hope soon to rival in Cape Town; but, oh! we sighed with envy when we visited the magnificent public baths. Entering the pretty porch, an attendant met us, and showed us the beautiful large swimming-bath, built in a lofty hall. It is of varying depth, and is filled with salt water. There is, however, a fair-sized fresh water plunge-bath adjoining, and numerous dressing-rooms open on to the hall. The baths are available daily from six a.m., the hours being conveniently arranged for Sundays. Thursday is the ladies' day, when as many as 500 ladies often visit the swimming-bath. Passing along a tiled stoep, looking on to a gay flower garden, we entered another part

of the building, and were shown the elaborate system of Turkish baths. At the other end of the stoep was a French hairdresser's shop.

Opposite the Town-hall are the public gardens, which are kept in splendid order. Crossing the gardens, we found the Royal Hotel: a considerable portion is being rebuilt and a new wing being added, but when we visited Durban it was somewhat of a labyrinth, and the rooms were very small and hot. In the centre of the hotel buildings was an open courtyard, shaded by an awning. It was called Umhudi-square, and visitors would gather round the fountain among the palms, trying in vain to get a breath of cool air, and listening to the nightly serenade of the mosquitos. The proprietor of the Royal also owns the Alexandra Hotel, so that visitors can arrange to have their meals at the Royal Hotel, which is in a central part of Durban, and have rooms at the Alexandra Hotel. The latter is built at the Point, near the Umbilo lagoon. The rooms are large, there is a long balcony from which one can enjoy a refreshing sea-breeze at night, and best of all there is a (comparative) immunity from the sweet music of mosquitos! (For ladies and families, F. decidedly recommends the Alexandra. "Bachelors and gentlemen travelling alone may possibly more appreciate the—*liveliness*—we will call it, of the Royal.") Next to the Royal Hotel is the Durban Club, which is not much frequented, business men preferring to return to their cool residences on the Berea after office hours. (F., who was courteously made an honorary member during our stay, describes the club as "decidedly superior in accommodation and comfort to most others he has visited in the Colony, but yet like them it is more a place of meeting for lunch or a game of billiards or pyramids, the fashionable game there, in the middle of the day than a resort in the evenings.")

Close at hand we found one of the numerous ricksha stands. Jinrickshas were recently introduced into Natal from Japan, and soon became popular, being universally used in Durban, in fact no hansom cabs are to be seen anywhere. Rickshas resemble small-sized buggies or enlarged perambulators, they are very light with two large wheels similar to those of bicycles, and are drawn by Kafir runners, who are called "boys," in distinction to the Indians who are always called "coolies." Rickshas vary in size, but generally hold two people comfortably. Kafirs hire them for five shillings per day and make their own profits, there is a fixed tariff, the fares being about the same as cab hire in Cape Town. Many residents import their own rickshas from Hong Kong, these are generally superior to the hired vehicles, and are often artistically ornamented in black and gold. Kafir boys are untiring runners, but are stupid about directions, and certainly lack the bump of locality, as we found to our cost. We had promised

Dr. Gill to visit the Natal Observatory and see the astronomer. We waited in vain for a cool day, and one hot afternoon went to look for a ricksha near the public gardens. We were instantly surrounded by Kafir runners, all eagerly descanting on the merits of their vehicles and themselves. I selected the runner with the most elaborate headdress, strings of beads were twisted about his head, ornaments like Christmas-tree candles stuck out in all directions, and over his forehead projected an ornament like the horn of a unicorn; indeed, he was gorgeous to behold! "To the Observatory," said F. briefly, but his direction was met first by a look of blank amazement, and then by an outpouring of musical Zulu clicks, accompanied by expressive gestures. "To Mr. Neville's, to see the stars," explained F., but the runner was no wiser than before, and the other Kafir boys gathered round, eagerly chattering and explaining their views on the subject, their former interest in our choice of a ricksha being quite forgotten in their childish eagerness and curiosity to know where we wanted to go. F. got impatient, and poured out a flood of eloquent Cape Dutch, which did not help matters much. Finally, in despair, he seized his walking-stick, and using it as a telescope, pointed heavenwards, and pretended to be star-gazing. Instantly all the eager faces followed the telescopic directions, and stared upwards with breathless interest, but soon returning earthwards, the runners shook their woolly heads with a mournful expression, which called to mind a well-known local amateur's favourite ejaculation, "You can't do it!" "Well, drive to the Botanic Gardens, then," and at last getting an intelligible direction, our driver beamed with delight and trotted gaily off, avoiding all jolting with the skill of a practised jinricksha runner. We drove down West-street, and watched with interest the novel shops and vehicles and miscellaneous crowd of passers-by, of which more anon. There are several handsome buildings and shops in the principal Durban thoroughfare, and it seems a pity that the authorities should allow the lower end of this fine street to be monopolised by Indian traders, who have erected their miserable little shops and shanties next to the fine stores and offices occupied by European business men. In many respects though the Durbanites are ahead of us, and the Cape Town Council might take a few hints from them. We have nothing to equal the well-kept public gardens and extensive parks of both Durban and Maritzburg. The Durban roads are wider and better kept than ours, all refuse being promptly removed, not swept into heaps to await the tardy movements of contractors' carts; the pavements are more even and regular; the tramways superior; and everything looks cleaner and more orderly. Papers and stones do not fly about at every gust of wind, and a crowd of shouting boys round the post-office would soon be dispersed

by the native police force. Furious driving, except on the part of the doctors, appears to be unknown, and it is *not* necessary to step off the pavement half-a-dozen times to make way for Malay women, who, with wide-spreading, crackling skirts, are out for an afternoon's promenade and shop-gazing. Those who are wont to hurry down Adderley-street to catch the five p.m. train in the face of such difficulties and obstructions, will readily grasp the advantage. By the shores of the Umbilo the fishhorn tooteth not, and impromptu concertina and tontom serenades are not wafted abroad upon the (balmy ?) breath of the summer air, though the efforts of trained musicians are appreciated by visitors strolling through the parks on warm summer evenings. Best of all, sneek-like scents do not pervade the streets, and on the subject of sanitation we might say much, but think it wiser to refrain, knowing that the ears of many readers are afflicted with a delicacy which, alas! rarely extends to their noses.

Meanwhile we have left West-street, and are out on the broad Berea road, our driver whistling gaily all the way, and exchanging cheery remarks with passing runners. Dismissing the ricksha near the Botanic Gardens, we wandered about the shady lanes at the lower end of the Berea trying in vain to find the Observatory, as most of the passers-by seemed to be in complete darkness as to its whereabouts. At last we found the pretty wooden building in a terraced garden, but being Saturday afternoon, everyone was away, and all the doors locked. "How thankful should we be to get even a chance of resting," I murmured, as we waited under the broad verandah, admiring the lovely view, and sighing in vain for tea. Natal is ahead of us in another respect, for lady computers are employed at the Observatory, generally winding up their daily labours with tea and tennis. We might commend the innovation to our Astronomer-Royal, for ladies being gifted with observant powers, might be employed in other branches of the work, astronomy yielding a wide field for observation. (The other one: "For the moment we cease to be we, and were it not that this paper has already exceeded prescribed limits, I should crave for a volume to myself to protest. Natal is ahead of us truly in this respect, and long, as far as Cape Town is concerned, may it remain so. Yet another invasion in South Africa of men's domain! How far distant is the time when the sterner sex will have *volens volens* to relinquish to the dependent sex their gradually vanishing means of employment in, at any rate, sedentary occupations, and be forced to don the garb of woman, to boss the kitchen and pantry, work the sewing machines, and order their own meals!")

Another day we explored the lovely end of Durban known as the Berea, where most of the well-to-do townspeople live. Durban is built on the shores of a broad, shallow lagoon at the

mouth of the Umbilo. The shore opposite the town consists of low green hills, terminating in a promontory called the Bluff, which stretches out into the Indian Ocean, and is crowned by a lighthouse. The Berea answers to the Gardens of Cape Town; it is the hilly inland country extending along the Umbilo, and is crowded with lovely houses and gardens.

While waiting at the Town-hall for the Florida-road tram, we amuse ourselves by watching the ordinary street life of Durban. We miss the hurry and bustle of Adderley-street; Durbanites takes things "sootjes." On the pavement below, groups of business men clad in flannels, and trying to get some shade under huge white umbrellas, are discussing—shares, the price of sugar, or maybe Mr. Rhodes's doings, the latter a never-failing topic of interest in Natal. Hindoos in flowing robes stalk solemnly by, their grave, composed faces contrasting with the beaming countenances of the grinning, chattering natives, clad in the scantiest attire. The native policemen wear the ordinary police uniform, only they are barefooted, and carry knobkerries. They keep excellent order, and show wonderful readiness and keen delight in running in their dusky brethren. Now some groups of blanketed Kafirs pass, the women's headdresses are wonderful to behold and their erect, supple figures and free, graceful walk are remarkable when one considers the heavy weights they carry on their heads, and the fat babies slung on their backs. Some Indian coolie girls follow; bright silken scarves are wound gracefully about them, and their wealth of jewellery flashes in the bright sunlight. Now a heavy wagon comes lumbering by; it evidently belongs to the Trappist Monastery, for it is driven by a brown-robed monk, and several of the sad-faced, silent brethren are gathered near. Several carriages follow, driven by Indian coachmen, dressed in spotless white, with coloured turbans. Numbers of ladies have come in from Bellair and the Berea for a day's shopping, and as Natal girls are not fond of walking, jinrickshas are in great request, and are constantly passing, their runners keeping up a succession of gay remarks with their numerous acquaintances. Here comes a ricksha containing a lady in gay attire, a bright yellow gown with a green sash, and a large, shady hat covered with flowers; indeed, it is no unusual sight to see girls out shopping dressed as if for a garden party. P. was much struck with the prevalence of red hair amongst the girls and children; the former do not look as bright and animated as Cape girls, but the relaxing climate would soon make the most energetic woman languid and indifferent. Beneath the shade of the palm trees in the gardens, opposite the Town-hall, children are playing under the care of Kafir boy nurses, who seem devoted to their little charges, watching them with tender care, and

trying to keep the most fretful babies amused and happy. Would that the nurses in the Government Avenue could take a lesson. The pale, fragile appearance of the wee folks contrasts pathetically with the rosy looks and cheerful energy of the little people we have recently seen at the Port Elizabeth Collegiate School. Suddenly above the numerous street-cries rises the shrill wail of an Indian woman's voice. She is crouched on the steps near the garden-gate, and is moaning and wailing over the dead body of her little one gathered in her arms, a woman friend joins her, and their piercing cries drown the other children's happy voices. It is a painful contrast to the bright, animated scene, and the great reality is borne in upon us—in the midst of life—but our tram is waiting near the fountain, and soon the street noises are left behind, and we are driving along the green shady avenues leading to the Berea.

The Durban trams are very light and clean, the wooden seats are reversible, and the cars are open on all sides, so that there is a constant current of air on the hottest days, but awnings are put up on one side during rainy weather. At the various stopping-places there are pretty wooden verandahs, kept scrupulously clean, and provided with seats for passengers, who can thus wait comfortably in the shade. After leaving the Botanic Gardens we plunge deeper into shadowy avenues, and soon the full beauties of the Berea are revealed to us. It seems impossible to do full justice to all that summer loveliness when attempting to describe it. As I write in the hot sunlight, the glaring white paper and hard black letters seem totally inadequate means for describing that leafy greenery. All round me now the land is scorched bare and brown by burning winds and midsummer sunshine, the topmost branches of the tall gumtrees stir gently in the faint breeze, bird notes sound from the distant pine-woods. Pushing the paper away, I close my eyes and dream myself back into the silent leafy glades, the glowing gardens and smooth, shadowy, green lawns of the Berea.

The Berea hills are intersected with deep lanes and smooth, well-kept roads, lovely houses and gardens cluster everywhere, not a few scattered estates, but a constant succession of beautiful homes. We were struck by their unique beauty, showing marked individual taste, and in some houses great wealth on the part of their owners; there are no rows of stuccoed villas in wearisome monotony, but hundreds of beautiful *homes*, surrounded with shady orchards, green sloping lawns, and gay flower gardens. The larger houses, like English country seats, are adapted to a tropical country. Some are built of stone, others of red brick, pretty little balconies and gabled windows jutting out to command a wide view of sunlit sea or glimpse of the distant hills. Here is a quaint wooden bungalow, with deep verandah, overgrown with briar roses; next comes a

pretty gabled cottage, with lattice windows opening on to the daisied lawn. Yonder a great red-brick mansion glows among the trees, the deep balcony commanding extensive views over the town and lagoon. Further on a rambling, weather-stained stone-house with high gabled roof rises on the hill-side, terraced lawns, shaded by drooping tree ferns, descending to the winding road.

(F. adds that before leaving the subject of the houses "mention should be made of the excellent and cheap bricks and roofing tiles manufactured both in Durban and Maritzburg. The bricks struck me as being of better quality and make than any in this colony, and the tiles in every respect the equal of those imported from Belgium or France. I am at a loss to understand why tile roofs with us here are not oftener adopted. Nothing exceeds them for coolness or stability, and in appearance they have decidedly an advantage over slates or iron. On the score of economy, too, I should imagine they should find patrons.")

Then the profusion of flowers and ferns and wealth of foliage are a constant source of wondering delight, many of our garden flowers growing quite wild. We will wander along this winding lane and gather a few roadside flowers. One side of the lane is sheltered by a thick jessamine hedge, the white starlike blossoms gleaming among the dark green leaves; on the other side clusters of pink and crimson roses trail over the garden hedges, scattering their rosy petals amongst the flickering shadows on the pathway. We reach in vain for those sweet white dogroses with their pure delicate petals and hearts of gold, while in gorgeous contrast the rich scarlet petals and long velvety pistils of the hibiscus rosea are glowing in the hot sunshine. The convolvulus creeper with its blue trumpet flowers so exquisitely veined twines about the tree ferns and lights up the dark woods. A few waxen orange blossoms drop softly on to the emerald-green lawns. When the fruit is ripe the golden oranges gleams in the shadowy groves add to the enchantment of the Berea gardens. The lane winds over a hill and we turn to admire the lovely outlook. Below us lies the town, with its wide streets thronged with people, beyond is the broad lagoon dotted with tiny yachts, their white sails outspread to catch the faint breeze, looking like seabirds dipping their wings in the rippling water.

(F. adds: "On first viewing a yacht race from the wharf at Durban, which took place during a furious south-east gale, I was filled with admiration at what appeared to be the daring though reckless seamanship of the crews of the various yachts, resulting, in the course of the afternoon, however, in the capsizing of some six or seven of these little craft, and fully expected that the evening paper would contain the names of

many who had found a watery grave owing to their temerity. When informed, however, that in hardly any spot in the lagoon is the water more than four or five feet deep, I began to think that there was not so much in it, and that yachting without any element of danger in it is robbed at any rate of much of its charm.") The lagoon is really the estuary of the Umbilo, and we follow the winding of the broad river till it is lost in the heart of the green hills. At the further end of the

lagoon is a low green island; beyond are wooded hills, terminating in the Bluff, which stretches out into the blue waters of the Indian Ocean. We would gladly have lingered in this enchanted ground, and were looking forward to exploring Bellair and the Umbilo end of the Berca, but the increasing heat became well-nigh unendurable, and we finally decided to take the train for the North, and put off further wanderings round about Durban till we returned from Maritzburg.



2.—MARITZBURG.

"It was the time when lilies blow."

After a few days of exhausting Durban heat, I awoke one morning with a sigh of relief, for we were going "up-country" by the early train, and were looking forward to a more endurable atmosphere on the breezy Maritzburg hills. We found that the express train left at night, so thought it better to travel by the nine a.m. slow train, in order to see something of the country. The Natal Government railway service is in many ways inferior to ours. Durban Station is not an inviting place at which to wait for trains, and we found it impossible to get a time-table, or much reliable information as to the arrival or departure of trains. The fares are rather lower than in the Cape Colony, and return tickets for any considerable distance extend over several months. There was not much choice of carriages, and having selected the least uncomfortable one, we amused ourselves by watching the motley crowd of Indians, Zulus, and Kafirs on the platform. Some of the older Kafir women who have lost the grace of early youth are about as repulsively ugly as it is possible for women to be, for it is the most painful form of ugliness, the human countenance nullified by the human soul and mind. The crowd of natives would have been an instructive sight for some enthusiastic members of the Aborigines' Protection Society, perhaps even the virtuous member for Northampton might have enlarged his ideas had he been there to see, and it is possible that for some time afterwards we should hear fewer glowing—and imaginative—descriptions of the noble savage and his many wrongs.

At last, to our great relief, the train started, and soon leaving the houses and streets behind, we descended into the shadowy vales, or climbed the steep inclines of the hill country. "How thankful should we be to be going north," I contentedly murmured, feasting my eyes on the beauties of the surrounding scenery. For some miles north of Durban all the available land is cultivated. Round about Umgeni we noticed extensive coffee plantations, further on we passed between hills covered with banana groves and pineapple plantations. The planters' bungalows are generally built on the summits of the hills, and the varied and extensive views from the deep verandahs are beautiful beyond description. Now we pass through a bit of woodland, intersected by shadowy winding paths, the blue convolvulus creeper tangled between the spreading trees; next a fruit farm comes into view with Kafirs working in the

banana fields; on the summits or wooded slopes of yonder hills picturesque red houses, with high-pitched tiled roofs, make bright gleams of colour amid the sombre green. A turn in the hills brings into view a glimpse of shining sunlit sea, while overhead float clouds like fleecy flocks "shepherded by the slow unwilling wind." The wayside stations are quaintly pretty and exquisitely clean, with such charming little gardens filled with lilies of every form and hue, glowing scarlet and gleaming gold or purest white, blowing to and fro in the faint warm wind, and the names of the stations often appearing in lovely flowers on a bank of emerald green.

There was a short delay at Bellair and our carriage was presently invaded by three small children with their elderly English nurse. F. and I, being true child lovers, were quite undisturbed by this invasion, but—well, F. always waxes eloquent on this topic, and indeed it has rarely been my lot to travel with such little torments. No passenger was safe for a moment from their unwelcome attentions, and we looked out for each station with mingled feelings of hope and dread, hope that we should be relieved from the company of the wee cherubs, and nervous dread of the frightful jerks with which the train pulled up and then started again on its upward way. The eldest girl of the noisy trio was of a pious turn of mind and would alternately quote texts or, in a shrill treble voice, announce her yearning desire to be an angel and with the angels stand, yearnings which I feared were not destined to be speedily satisfied, as in the intervals of taking breath she would soundly smack her younger sister, and then sing of heavenly aspirations with renewed vigour. Number 2 would promptly set up a terrific yell, and poor old nurse's oft-repeated threats, "I'll whip you, darling," or "You'll be punished, lovey," uttered in a mild, tired voice, proved quite unavailing to quiet the sweet little dears. The baby was quite the best behaved, and gazed in blue-eyed wonder at his sister's antics, submitting with cooing joy to being alternately squeezed or smacked, but presently watching his opportunity, he plunged his little dimpled hands into Number 2's curly hair, and pulled with laughing delight, amid a chorus of piercing shrieks! "How thankful should we be!" we exclaimed with heartfelt joy when our lively little fellow-passengers were finally bundled out with their exhausted old nurse, and we left them continuing the fray at Camperdown.

["F." adds: "After perusing 'E.'s comments on these little imps, I consider she has

not done them full justice, nor can I. I should like to engage another to write them up—someone with the gift of language, like the Dean of Cape Town. If our readers can imagine within their bed curtains two mammoth mosquitos which they were prohibited from molesting, but which were allowed to work their own sweet will on them throughout the night, just ponder a bit on that idea, and the madness that took possession of us will begin to make itself known to you. Before leaving the subject of children and railway-travelling in their society, let me commend to the railway authorities in the Colony an arrangement on commercial principles that works well in Natal, and that is earriages are set apart for school children on the suburban lines—one for boys and another for girls, in such trains as are running during the hours of going to and returning from school.”]

We stopped for lunch at Botha's Hill, a charming little station commanding extensive views of the vast hill country. We found the refreshment-rooms clean and tidy, and the lunch very tempting, while Kafir boys in neat holland suits noiselessly attended to the passengers' wants. Then on again climbing up towards Maritzburg; the gradients, though steep, are gradual, curving round the hills from height to height. We watched with keen delight the afternoon lights and shadows on the surrounding country, sunshine on the encircling hills, deepest shadows in the wooded valleys. We passed several kraals; the grass huts, like huge beehives, were perched on the summits or clustered on the sides of the steepest hills. There is a curious monotony though in the constant succession of rounded folding hills and long curving valleys extending as far as the eye can reach on every side. We travelled on the line twice, first climbing the heights to Maritzburg, and then curving down the hills to Durban, and had no great wish to go the same way again. We mentally contrasted the monotony of the scenery with the ever-varying beauty of sea and land in the Cape Peninsula. One may travel hundreds of times along the Wynberg line, and never weary of the changing tints of sunshiny plains extending to the distant blue and purple hills, or the rocky grandeur of the nearer mountains. New every morning is the massive beauty of the mountain heights upreared in the early light, while in the valleys below the night mists flee away. It is a daily inspiration, bringing renewed hope and courage, and when the noise of the city is left behind at evening, the grand old mountain sends its own message of peace and rest as the shadows lie deep in the pinewoods, and the last ray of sunset gilds the purple peaks. Such beauty is indeed a joy for ever, for its loveliness *increases*.

It was about three in the afternoon when the red houses of Maritzburg appeared through the trees on the hillsides, and we steamed into

the large, handsome station. Numbers of cabs and rickshas were waiting outside, but we may note in passing that the Maritzburg rickshas and runners are very inferior to those in Durban. Our luggage was soon stowed away in a quaint carryall labelled “Imperial,” and we gave the direction so oft-repeated in Natal that it had become quite a familiar phrase, “Go to Mrs. Thresh's.” The grey mist and cool breezes from the hills were most refreshing as we drove through the quiet streets and pulled up at a delightful old red-brick house in Loop-street, very unlike Cape Town Loop-street by the way, for it is more like a broad country road, with large gabled houses and charming gardens on either side. Mrs. Thresh is the proprietress of the Imperial, and we found her name quite a household word throughout Natal and beyond, but we ceased to wonder at it after a fortnight spent at the charming old hotel, an inn quite after Ruskin's heart. The Imperial is a rambling old house, which has been added to at various periods to suit the increasing number of visitors, and each wing has its own stoep and verandah. All the rooms are bright and airy, and nicely furnished, the walls of the large dining-room being adorned with branching horns and other trophies of the chase, for the late Mr. Thresh was a mighty hunter. Mrs. Thresh has kept the Imperial for over thirty years, and is now assisted by two bright young grand-daughters; she frankly owned that she delighted in housekeeping, looking upon it as a fine art. We felt certain that if several hotels of a similar type were established at our end of South Africa, increasing numbers of tourists and invalids would be attracted to the Cape as a health resort. [Note by F.: “I must add to my testimony as to the comfort of the Imperial, and the attention and courtesy of good, cheery Mrs. Thresh. The Imperial is to my mind the perfection of a colonial hotel, with its comfortable, airy, well-furnished bedrooms, excellent cuisine, and scrupulous cleanliness.”]

We spent a delightfully idle fortnight in Maritzburg, exploring places of interest in the town and neighbourhood, taking long rambles along country lanes during the cool morning hours, or trotting about in rickshas late in the afternoon. During the midday heat we idled over books and work under the broad verandah or in the cool airy courtyard of the Imperial, where we rested, if not under our own vine and figtree, then at least under our neighbour's, for vine leaves trailed over the red-brick wall, and oranges hung within tempting distance.

Maritzburg is built in a hollow surrounded with green hills. The outskirts remind one of a quiet English country town, with broad roads, semi-detached villas, and a few handsome houses in well-kept grounds. The illusion, however, is dispelled when one goes into the town, especially on market days, when crowds of Indians and blanketed Kafirs are constantly passing. Several of the streets

branch off into quiet little country lanes, with picturesque cottages and flower gardens, the roses trailing over the hedges into the grass-grown pathways. Clear streams ripple by, and broad green fields and meale plots stretch away to the encircling hills.

On the whole, Maritzburg is a much quieter and less pretentious town than Durban, and there is a still more marked tendency to take things "sootjes" in the capital of Natal than in the port. There are several fine public buildings, notably the Town-hall and Parliament Houses. We paid several visits to the Post-office, for the delivery of letters, parcels, &c., is both irregular and uncertain; and we set aside a morning for visiting some of the public buildings. We went into the Supreme Court—a square room with red draperies. A general air of sleepiness pervaded it, and there was an evident want of interest in the civil cases occupying the attention of the barristers who sat at a long table below the judges' box. We were much amused at the frequent repetition of "My Lord" in their speeches. Then we went on to the Town-hall, a fine, lofty, red-brick building more imposing on the whole than the Durban Town-hall. The hall itself is artistically decorated, and is a spacious handsome room with a fine organ and orchestra. Recitals and concerts are frequently given, several lady violinists playing in the orchestra. In the same building are several public offices, broad, cool corridors, leading to the airy, well-fitted rooms, nearly all of which were empty, for most of the clerks and officials seemed to be out—a sensible custom in such a trying climate. The square clock tower is 127 feet high and 100 feet from the street level. On hearing that we wished to get to the top of the tower, the caretaker produced a box of skewer-like pins, which he handed to me with a solemn countenance. Noticing my puzzled expression, he explained that the ladders were very steep, and it was therefore dangerous to attempt the ascent without pinning one's skirts. Having no yearning desire for a sudden death, I followed his advice, and we commenced ascending the winding stairs, which soon gave place to steep ladders—steep! well, during the last stages of our ascent the ladders were perfectly upright, and only by a hand-over-hand climb could we reach the top. However, we did it, and were amply rewarded by the magnificent view over the town and surrounding country. The clock and bells in the tower are enormous, but the chimes sound most musically over the quiet town every quarter of an hour. The clock dials are 8 feet 6 inches in diameter, the pendulum is 15 feet long and makes thirty beats a minute, the hour hand measures 3 feet and the minute hand 4 feet 6 inches. The clock is illuminated by electricity at night. It takes two natives an hour and a half every week to wind it up, and the cost of the clock and bells was £1,200—there! This information looks suspiciously like something

cribbed from a guide-book, doesn't it? But it's not, *really* not, because we could not procure any such thing in Natal; we fished out an ancient South African directory, but all the part relating to Natal had been carefully cut out! No, I obtained my information from the solemn caretaker, who, for a *guide*, was unusually intelligent. Like Miss Dartle, we thirsted for information, but we had to remain unsatisfied or investigate for ourselves, for even many old residents seemed to be utterly ignorant or indifferent with regard to the resources of their country or its places of interest. Well, the climate is trying.

From the four turret windows we obtained magnificent birdseye views in different directions. Just below us was the Market-square, crowded with wagons and long teams of oxen. In the opposite direction stretched a long narrow street, with crowds of Indians and Kafirs constantly passing. It was called Commercial-road, our guide said, but Arab-street would have been a more suitable name, for most of the low, dark shops seemed to be occupied by Indian traders, dressed in flowing robes. They lounged in the doorways or bargained with Kafir women who had come from the neighbouring kraals for a day's shopping. Several of the Maritzburg streets have very familiar names. Church, Longmarket, Loop, Burg, and Long streets, &c. Most of the roofs are tiled. Our guide remarked that capital tiles were made in Maritzburg, also machine-pressed bricks, which sold for about £2 per 1,000. Beyond and around the town are wooded hills, pretty country houses appearing between the green trees, and on the summit of a hill just outside the town rise the massive red walls of the Lunatic Asylum.

We were glad to descend, and enjoyed the cool breeze as we wandered under the shady trees, pausing to admire the fine monuments erected in the Public Gardens in memory of the Zulu war. The Colonial Offices are very poor buildings, little better than a collection of shanties, and the Surveyor-General's Department is equally shabby; we have pleasant recollections though of the latter office, owing to the untiring kindness and courtesy of Mr. Masson, then acting Surveyor-General, who so generously placed his time and wide knowledge at our disposal. We visited the Market, which was fairly clean, a fountain playing in the centre, and fine vegetables and fruit were being sold by auction, starting at farthing bids. We next visited the Houses of Parliament, a large marble statue of the Queen ("De vrouw met de witte pampoen," as we have heard a similar statue described by Grave-street passers-by) adorns the gardens in front of the building. The Legislative Council Chamber is a very handsome room, there is a very good reporters' gallery furnished with comfortable chairs, wires are stretched across the ceiling to improve the acoustic properties of the Council Chamber,

so reporters have a fair chance of hearing the debates. The Library is artistic and well-fitted, as indeed are all the offices in the Parliament building, many rooms being quite luxuriously furnished, colonial wood and workmanship are used throughout. Churches abound in Maritzburg; one Sunday morning we went to service in the Roman Catholic Church, a plain, unpretentious building, and in the evening to a native chapel, where the singing was almost too hearty and unrestrained for musical ears. We thought St. Saviour's Cathedral quite the most beautiful colonial church we had ever seen, and lingered long in the dim lovely chancel. Then we went on to lunch at the Deanery. Passing through a lovely garden and porch overgrown with roses, we entered a quaint room filled with books and flowers. We were charmed with the old-world courtesy and hospitality of the silver-haired Dean, and as we looked through the casement windows to the soft emerald lawn and shrubbery, and beyond to the folding green hills and grey sky, we were vividly reminded of a similar scene in the dear home land. Not quite the same though, with us then it was glorious summer, but there snow lay deep on the lawn, and ivy clustered round the study-windows where the silver-haired rector sat writing, or may be looking across to the meadows to the old walls of Chester where the quiet Dee flows, or beyond to the faint outlines of the Welsh hills against the grey sky.

Another morning we visited Mr. Shepstone's lovely home, and wandered in his garden, then all aglow with lilies and roses. We rather avoided schools, but visited the Maritzburg College, a very handsome red-brick building on a hill outside the town. The views from there are magnificent and the outside of the school-house is very imposing; the inside does not correspond, however, the class-rooms are small and shabby, and the furniture and apparatus very clumsy and old-fashioned. Major Herbert, Secretary to the Council of Education, very kindly supplied us with the latest inspector's reports, &c. From the code of standards I gleaned a delightful bit of information, "The work of girls in arithmetic will be judged more leniently than that of boys." Now isn't that perfectly charming—especially in a trying climate? It appealed with touching directness to one of us, who had sad recollections of childish struggles with the multiplication table, and who, having painfully got as far as six times eight, had then stuck fast. Childhood's days were long past, but that merciful clause had a charm

of its own, and we commend it to the attention of the Adderley-street authorities! Ours, too, is a trying climate, and only to few is it given (and how thankful should we be for it) to attain the serene mathematical heights of strong-minded women.

We had now visited most of the public buildings, except the asylum and brewery. F. could not get admittance to the latter place; the brewers, like the military, were exclusive, and that reminds me—there was a sort of social feud going on between the civilians and the military. The former accused the latter of exclusiveness—it seemed to us it was the other way about; but as mere outsiders we became weary of the constant topic of conversation, and anyhow, for social charm and courtesy, we were inclined to give the palm to the civilians. [Note by F.: "E. has intentionally or accidentally omitted mention of a race meeting which we attended while at Maritzburg. It was a purely military affair, and as neither the racing, riding, nor horses engaged were notable, simple allusion to the fact that there is still a racecourse at Maritzburg may suffice. I remember the time when Natal was famous for its racing stock. Is its glory departed?"] We shall ever retain grateful memories of the kindness and hospitality of our Maritzburg friends. Especially do we treasure the memory of delightful hours spent in Judge Turnbull's pretty house and garden, or at Major Herbert's charming country home, admiring the lovely pictures and books or listening to the interesting conversation of our cultured and genial host; or again at Dr. Hyslop's beautiful little home near the Asylum—but that requires a separate paper. We wound up our gaieties with an afternoon at Government House, which is in every respect equal to an English country residence. It is a large house, with a high-pitched tiled roof; there are quaint gables and porches on all sides, and the extensive grounds are kept in perfect order. Tennis was going on in spite of the heat but in that trying climate the players never pick up balls, that duty is performed by Zulu boys. Most of the guests dispersed on the green lawns or strolled along the winding paths, but we noticed the same want of animation amongst the girls which had struck us in Durban—they take their pleasures sadly. Our holiday, alas, was fast slipping by, and we decided to go north again, and spend a quiet day at the Umgeni Falls.



3.—ROUND ABOUT MARITZBURG—IN THE PARK— THE UMGENT FALLS—THE ASYLUM.

The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep,

The winds come to me from the fields of sleep.—
Immortality Ode.

Why rushed the discords in but that harmony
should be prized?—*Ibt Vogler.*

There are few pleasanter places in which to idle away a summer morning than the park at Maritzburg. It is on the whole much finer than the Durban park, being better kept and more frequented. Nature too has done much for Maritzburg, the Umgent winds through the well-kept grounds, trees hang over the river, and there are delightful drives and walks in all directions. The park is a favourite resort after the heat of the day, numbers of carriages and rickshas are constantly passing, children play in the long waving grass, their mothers and nurses bringing their work or books, and resting on the numerous benches placed under the shady trees. There is a cricket Oval, and—but I must stop a minute, for F. is longing to have his innings.

[Note by F.: "Cricket, both at Durban and Maritzburg, is played under somewhat adverse circumstances. Extreme heat and deluging rain militating much against the successful prosecution of the game. There is doubtless some good reason for playing in what is called the summer, though I was not made aware of it, but from what one hears, the climate in winter is admirably adapted for cricket. The manifold excellencies of the exponents of cricket, are they not written in the chronicles of Natal, the Transvaal, and Kimberley, and my expectations were raised high, as a keen lover of the game, at the opportunity having arrived of witnessing the prowess of the wielders of the willow and the trundlers of Natal and I must confess to a certain feeling of disappointment at not having those expectations more fully realised. There are three or four giants among the wicketers of Natal, and it is hardly necessary to allude by name to Sewell, Davey, Bell Smyth, and Taberer. Sewell I look upon as the best all-round cricketer South Africa has yet produced (not excepting the recognised champion, Tancred). Sewell, in addition to exceptional excellence in every department, is as keen as mustard, and as active as a cat, and I shall be surprised if, with both bat and ball, he is not near the top of the averages after the English matches are concluded. Davey, of course, is well known down here, but Bell Smyth and Taberer are new acquaintances, and are both men who would make any representative combination

from Natal a dangerous one. Among the younger generation of players, *i.e.*, boys from Hilton College and other large schools, there are many displaying much promise, and likely to train on. With regard to outside interest in cricket, there is the same apathy on the part of the general public that manifests itself here, but even in a greater degree, for at no important match, unless got up by the military, did I see anything approaching a respectable ring of spectators. No game can flourish, as it ought, unaccompanied by the exhilarating applause which marks some prominent bit of good play. No doubt cricket will become more a game of the people now that Natal has such a genuine and enthusiastic sportsman as Governor, but it should not require the inducement of a powerful leader of society to make cricket popular. A fair line as to the general quality of cricket at Natal can be obtained when I mention that many players score largely in first-class cricket teams there, whereas they were only looked on as moderate here. The grounds both at Durban and Maritzburg are prettily situated, but the turf is missing. An attempt at turf in the outfield has been made at Durban Oval, but it is not a success."]

As our fortnight at Maritzburg was fast drawing to an end we decided to spend a day at Howick in order to see the famous Umgent Falls before returning to Durban. We left by the early train for the north and had a lovely day for the journey. The train slowly climbed the northern heights, and we had ample time to enjoy the wide views of green hills and valleys. For some miles beyond Maritzburg the land was cultivated and we passed several pretty country houses, with gardens all ablow with lilies and roses. The vivid greenness and softness of the folding hills was most refreshing, no rocks or krantzes were to be seen anywhere. It was curious too to note that the trees flourished on the tops of the hills, not in the kloofs, until we got further north, when the scenery became wilder and grander, the hills were dotted with kraals, the grass huts resembling mushrooms on mounds of earth, and the gullies and kloofs were well wooded.

We reached Howick, which is a pretty little hamlet nestling between green hills, before midday, and had a pleasant drive to the hotel. Our inquiries as to the direction of the Falls were met by looks of stupid amazement, and getting no reliable information, we set out to investigate for ourselves. F. doubtfully remarked that he thought he heard a sort of hum, and we followed the faint sound, which

soon increased to a roar. Following a narrow footpath across a field we came suddenly upon the Umgeni Falls. There is nothing in the surrounding scenery to indicate any precipice or waterfall. The soft green hills extend to the very verge of the falls. The Umgeni winds quietly along and then suddenly thunders sheer down a steep precipice with a deafening roar, the spray spreading far and wide. The height of the fall is 360 feet, and the precipice is almost perpendicular. Our first view was from the top, and the falls, swollen by recent heavy rains, were simply magnificent. We got quite giddy watching the ceaseless rush of the waters, sometimes spreading like finest lace-work over dark, jutting rocks, anon pouring in chick volumes of water over gaps in the rocky trags, and finally hissing and churning in a deep, dark pool at the base of the precipice. We were anxious to get a view from the bottom of the falls, so managed with some difficulty to scramble down into the gorge, but as the bushes and slippery grass were saturated with recent rains, we were soon shivering with damp and cold. We were rewarded though, for the view was even grander than from the top, and we stood long, looking upwards until we were drenched, and were forced to retreat. As the waters whirled in the dark pool foam and spray like veils of thinnest lawn were spreading in mists far around, and though we were standing at a considerable distance from the precipice, we were so enveloped in spray that it was difficult to get a clear view of the lower part of the falls. After all that ceaseless roar and whirl at the foot of the crags it was surprising to watch the Umgeni winding quietly away again between the steep walls of the valley. A picturesque red-brick house, belonging to the Treasurer-General, is perched above the valley, and commands a fine view of the falls.

[Here F. interposes: "I have no desire to see a well-engineered roadway down to the bottom of the falls for the convenience of elderly dames and others who object to the slightest fatigue intermingling with their sight-seeing, but something might be done for those who do not desire to emulate the daring agility of the chamois hunter of the Alps, and who, at any rate, like to rest from their labours after having achieved their object. No doubt it is rare good fun for the young men and maidens of Natal to help one another down this tortuous and slippery path, and that many picturesque situations might form the subject of snap shots from the opposite hillside, but for those whose days of romance are over I plead for a less precipitous descent."]

We were glad to get dry and warm over a fire in the tiny inn parlour. [F desires here to unburden his mind and make a confession to the following effect, "Notwithstanding the charm I usually found in E.'s society, the sight of a billiard-table of rather superior make and

in a better state of repair than is usually looked for in out-of-the-way places like Howick, was too much for me, carried my mind back to days of long ago at the Civil Service Club, Cape Town, and shook to its foundations the resolution to withstand the temptations of this fascinating game. The landlord was interviewed and spanned in. After winning the first game, I confidently offered fifty in 100, and got so elated at continued success that I entertained thoughts of challenging Natal generally to single combat on the green-cloth."]

In the afternoon we decided to brave the drizzling rain and drive to a large farm in the neighbourhood. All our inquiries about farming and agriculture had been met with such vague and negative replies that we were somewhat inclined to quote the whole chapter on snakes in Ireland, with slight alterations, and simply say "There are in Natal no farms of any description whatever." That, probably, would be quite incorrect, but anyhow we failed to get any information as to the resources or cultivation of the colony even from people who ought to have known something about it. The farm we visited was, we were told, about the finest and largest in the country, so we were very much disappointed when we reached a painfully new dwelling-house. The outbuildings were poor and there seemed to be few signs of cultivation, but dairy-farming on an extensive scale was evidently carried on, for we were told that 300 lb. of butter were sent weekly to Durban and sold at 1s. 4d. a lb.

The next morning it poured with rain, but we managed a walk between the showers. After we had shivered in ulsters for a long time at the station the evening train came slowly steaming in, and we descended through the wreathing mists to Maritzburg. The Umgeni Falls are well worth a visit, but otherwise we found Howick a most depressing place. It is consequently a favourite resort for honeymoons.

The sight of the numerous kraals on the hillsides had excited my curiosity, and on returning to Maritzburg I persuaded F. to try to get a nearer view. Mr. Masson kindly offered to drive us to Teteleku's Kraal, one of the largest in the neighbourhood. We set out one frightfully hot afternoon, and after bumping over a rough country road for several miles, drew up at the foot of a steep hill. A long wearisome climb followed, for we missed our way and were quite exhausted when we at last caught sight of the beehive huts. Teteleku's Kraal is on the summit of a high hill, and on the next hillside is another kraal of similar size. The views of the surrounding country are magnificent, but we were cruelly disenchanted when we saw the squalor and dirt of the huts and hard mud pathways. A fine stalwart young Kafir woman with a fat baby slung on her back welcomed us with many grins, and we were soon surrounded by a crowd

of children dressed (?) in beads. On inquiry for Teteleku we were told he had gone to town, and had locked his hut door and taken the key with him. Yes, indeed, the hut had a real wooden door securely padlocked—such is the spread of civilisation! On the whole it was not a pleasant visit, and when F. distributed some coins and we were instantly surrounded by a crowd of yelling Kafirs, I became quite alarmed, and followed the example of a small brother who once went to see a monkey, and when it came alarmingly near, remarked in trembling, would-be matter of fact voice, "Don't you think it's time to go home to tea?" Well, we went home to tea. F. made sarcastic remarks about people who always wanted their own way, and—we visited no more Kafir kraals. [F. disclaims any intention of making the aforesaid sarcastic remarks public, but adds, "I content myself with recommending young ladies to content themselves with viewing semi-barbarous life through the medium of books, and the aid of their own fertile imaginations."]

Before leaving Maritzburg, we accepted Dr. Hyslop's invitation to spend a day at the Natal Government Asylum, which is quite a model institution. We had previously attended one of the weekly Monday evening entertainments, and had been much interested in all we had seen. The recreation-room is a beautiful large hall, most artistically decorated, and with a perfect floor for a dance. The programme was varied, consisting alternately of music, dancing, &c.; visitors, nurses, and patients contributing to the entertainment. The patients thoroughly entered into the spirit of the evening, and it was a real pleasure to watch the evident enjoyment of each item on the programme. We were quite surprised to find most of the patients quite familiar with both square and round dances, indeed many of them danced remarkably well. The nurses said they had constant practice, and eagerly looked forward to each Monday evening. When one's first feeling of nervousness had worn off there seemed to be nothing out of the way in dancing with lunatics; indeed, it was often difficult to detect any signs of insanity. Dancing the lancers with an elderly partner, who stared straight ahead, but had a strong preference for dancing the figures *backwards*, was a wee bit trying; so also was a lengthy waltz with an energetic (likewise elderly) partner, who insisted on beginning with the first note of the music, and never paused to take breath till the last note had died away. As a rule we found it difficult to get the patients to enter into conversation; but I had a pleasant dance with a partner who talked most sensibly, and was quite surprised to hear from the doctor that he was a bad patient, but this happened to be one of his lucid intervals. It was difficult too to recognise any signs of insanity in a sweet-looking, elderly lady with

soft, silvery hair. She was very fond of music, and thanked F. with touching sweetness for the two songs he contributed to the programme. A comical performance with castanets by a visitor gave great delight, as did also a step-dance executed with marvellous agility by a patient over seventy years of age, but who would not acknowledge to being a day over twenty-seven. Rosser, the accomplished carpenter (of whom more anon), contributed a song, to his own evident satisfaction. Dr. Hyslop told us that patients who excelled in any accomplishment were keenly jealous of new-comers who displayed similar talents. Mrs. Hyslop was an untiring accompanist, and by her kindness and charm of manner succeeded in making the evening's entertainment pass off most pleasantly, for her bright cheeriness seemed to infect all present. We were charmed, too, with the sweet-faced lady matron, and the bright, energetic young nurses, several of whom played and sang with great taste. [This brings to F.'s mind the case of one female patient which much interested him. He remarks: "I had picked this face out of the crowd as one which puzzled me from its utter vacuity of expression. In most countenances one could trace some gleams of intelligence and interest at times in what was going on, but in this poor girl's case it seemed 'total eclipse.' To enable me to satisfy myself of her incapacity of being roused, I inquired of Mrs. Hyslop whether I might ask her to dance, and having obtained permission was amazed to find her a most accomplished dancer, and that, although I tried her skill in all the possible dodges of a round dance, she beat me hollow at my own game, but not one word of conversation or smile of amusement or pleasure could I extract. I afterwards made some inquiries concerning her, and ascertained that her mind was an utter blank as far as receptiveness went, but that accomplishments of which she had been the possessor before reason failed her she retained to a marvellous extent, and that she would sit down to the piano and play for hours music with which she had been formerly familiar, but if new music were placed before her it conveyed no meaning. Such cases speak to us so eloquently and yet so sadly; though living they are dead."]

We had been so much interested and pleased that we gladly accepted an invitation to spend a long day at the asylum and go over all the buildings. One bright sunny morning we drove along a country road to the asylum gates. The Natal Government Asylum is built on a hill outside Maritzburg, and is surrounded with extensive grounds. A winding drive through the beautiful gardens brought us to the doctor's pretty house. We thought it one of the most charming homes we had visited in Natal, and the courtesy and hospitality of Dr. and Mrs. Hyslop made the day we spent with them one of our pleasantest memories. The doctor was

busy with some patients, so Mrs. Hyslop received us. She was evidently keenly interested in all the patients and work connected with the asylum, and we were thoroughly interested in all she told us. The woodwork, both outside and inside their house is very beautiful and artistic, and we were surprised to learn that it was all designed and executed by Rosser. We sat under the verandah, and the scene in front of us was a summer idyl—the garden ablaze with flowers, slender feathery bamboos waving in the faint warm wind, and the vast hill country stretching away to the distant grey horizon.

After lunch Dr. Hyslop took us over the asylum. It is a very handsome, red-brick building, with high-pitched, overhanging tiled roof and lofty turret tower. Grass terraces slope away from the dark red walls, and the grounds are very extensive and are kept in beautiful order. There are broad gravelled walks, shrubberies, lawns, and gardens, also a fine cricket ground and pretty conservatory. Mounting the broad flight of steps, we entered a large airy hall with tiled floor; there was a beautifully carved hat-stand, also a flower-stand filled with potted plants and ferns. "Rosser's work," Dr. Hyslop remarked. Rosser is a patient with a talent for carving and carpentering which almost amounts to genius, and evidences of his industry and skill were to be seen in every room. We first visited the female ward, where the polished floor fairly shone with cleanliness. Next came the pretty little chapel, with desks and seats skilfully carved by the clever carpenter. Then we passed on to the spacious recreation-room with large casement windows commanding wide views of the surrounding country.

It is impossible to speak too highly of the spotless purity and cleanliness of the wards and other rooms, and of the brightness and cheeriness which prevailed everywhere. We were specially struck with the ingenious sliding window-shutters and the artistic dados and tints on the painted walls. Entering a pretty, well-furnished, private sitting-room we found the musical old lady, who at once recognised F. and began talking to him about musical matters. Indeed we were pleasantly surprised at being recognised by several patients who had seen us at the Monday evening's entertainment. In some of the storerooms were large cupboards, and Dr. Hyslop asked us to examine the wood graining carefully. To our astonishment we discovered all sorts of weird figures in the graining—curious creatures with antlered horns, human faces with distorted expressions; there was not an aimless line, and the figures and scenes represented were intermingled in every conceivable way. The work was the outcome of Rosser's vivid but uncontrolled imagination, and yet the general appearance of the wood, until closely examined, resembled ordinary graining. In the spacious yard we found numbers of patients enjoying the fresh air and sunshine

under the charge of bright young nurses. Beyond the yard was another large building, which used to be the old hospital, but is now used for native quarters. There are about 160 patients, as they are received from the Transvaal and Free State, as well as Natal. We mounted the tower, and had a splendid view of Maritzburg, the red houses looking most picturesque between the trees. The Town-hall and Clock Tower stood out boldly, but we were struck by the absence of spires in the town. Wooded hills and valleys folded into one another on all sides. Overhead was a dull, grey sky, but a soft wind was blowing, and as the clouds parted there were sudden gleams of sunshine, which added to the variety and beauty of the tints on the hills, pale-green, emerald, and bluish-grey in the dim distance. Long shadows swept over the woods and valleys, but anon a break in the clouds threw a burst of sudden sunshine on the gardens below, while afar were still "the fine glooms on the rare blue hills."

After leaving the main building we visited Rosser's workshop, where we found much to interest us, and had a lengthy discussion with the clever workman. The room was filled with specimens of his skill, and he seemed to possess every imaginable tool. F. congratulated him on the latter possessions, but gave great offence, as it is one of the carpenter's delusions that he does all his work either without proper tools or with very imperfect instruments. He was also offended at being congratulated on his clever handiwork, and indignantly asserted that his work was professional. He likewise objected to Mrs. Hyslop's covering the inlaid wood floor of her hall with a rug, but was soothed when the doctor told him it was done to preserve the beautiful workmanship. Hearing that F. was interested in engineering he entered into a lengthy discussion with him, explaining his clever plans and exhibiting their neat draughtsmanship with conscious pride which increased to positive delight when he succeeded in puzzling F. with a particularly complicated diagram. We were keenly interested in his ingenious contrivances and inventions, churns warranted to produce butter in an incredibly short time, movable desks and music-stands, &c. One hardly knew which to admire most, the inventive genius shown in the mechanical contrivances or the imagination and patient skill displayed in the workmanship throughout, especially in the exquisitely carved figures and ornaments. [F. chimes in: "Never before have I felt so conscious of having put my foot in it as during the quarter of an hour spent in this workshop. Dr. Hyslop specially warned me not to enter into anything controversial with poor Rosser, but I did not understand him to mean that I was to forbear from admiring and taking apparent interest in the appliances at his command, and the ingenuity he had displayed in

their use. Consequently when I innocently referred to them, it was at once apparent to me that I had done the very thing I ought not to have done, and no sooner had I ventured to air my own very slight knowledge of some properties in a model of Rosser's design, than he was off like a turning lathe on one pressure of the foot on the treadle, soon had me out of my depth, and became so excited that Dr. H. had to curtail our visit and adroitly get me out of further mischief." We had no time for further investigations, and as Mrs. Hyslop detained us for tea, it was late in the day when we bade a reluctant farewell to the doctor and his wife, the pleasantest and most interesting friends we had made in Natal. Dr. Hyslop seemed to us in every way eminently fitted for the responsible position he holds as head of the asylum, which he has made quite a model institution of its kind. The doctor's striking

personality is not easily forgotten, the thoughtful, resolute face, and singularly bright luminous eyes showing plainly keen intellect and determination, and coolness and readiness of resource in emergencies. In him too we found that wide sympathy, bright unselfishness, and clear-sightedness, which one never looks for in vain in good physicians, for the asylum doctor is in every way a worthy representative of the noblest of professions.

As we left the asylum and talked over the day's experiences and impressions, F. expressed his unbounded admiration of the unselfish devotion shown by the good doctor, his wife, and the bright young nurses. I called to mind an article of the creed which the Master of S. George's Guild, himself one of the noblest of living humanitarians, gave to his disciples and repeated with renewed conviction, "I believe in the nobleness of human nature."



4.—THE TRAPPIST MONASTERY AT MARIANHILL.

"Do ye next thyng."

One grey, misty morning we bade farewell to Maritzburg and turned southward to Durban, planning to break the journey at Pinetown, and visit the famous Trappist Monastery. I had persisted in fulfilling my long-cherished wish to see the silent friars at work, in spite of F.'s amused wonder as to what possible pleasure a person who was not given to practising the golden rule of silence could find in spending a day with the Trappists! As the train slowly steamed out of the station, and we took a last look at the red houses on the wooded hills of Maritzburg, the nearer mists parted, revealing the marvellous play of light and shadow on the hills and valleys through which our journey lay. No words fitly describe that wonderful hill country. One might liken it to a vast ocean, whose waves, suddenly arrested in full motion, lay here in great green billows with trough-like valleys between, there in long smooth waves curving and crossing in all directions, anon in gentle undulations, or dimpled into myriads of emerald ripples. The train curved from hill to hill, downward, ever downward, till we reached Pinetown. A wagonette was waiting at the station, and the driver, a brown-robed friar, welcomed us cordially. Brother Crispin, being one of the visitors' guides, was no longer bound by the vow of silence, and chatted gaily as we jolted along the rough country road, which, we were gravely informed, was kept in order by the brothers at great expense.

[Interpolation by F., the other of us: "Oh, that road, triumph of engineering skill though the holy friar considered it. Jolted along it does E. say? Utterly inadequate description. To begin with, that wagonette could never have been built at Mariannahill, or if so, long before the present stage of development in that industry, and dear Brother Crispin, much as I admire him, and varied as are his accomplishments, shines not as a Jehu, save and except that he driveth furiously. The sensation experienced throughout the drive was that of being tossed incessantly in a blanket, without however the comforting assurance that you would come down soft, or indeed inside what you had emerged from, such was the rate at which we sped along. To intensify the discomfort too, a fair sized tin-box with unrounded edges, and packed to bursting point, lay loose, and bounded with sportive playfulness from side to side with every lurch we gave, occasionally accompanying us in our upward flights. E. did nothing but laugh immoderately and most disrespectfully at my

evident anxiety on her account (laughter mingled with tears and sorrow next day), and joined not in my fervent maledictions on the *Trappists* and all their ways."]

We met several friars driving heavy wagons as we passed through fertile valleys and over green hills crowned with palms and tree-ferns, and the low grey mist brooded over all.

After about twenty minutes' drive, we saw the massive red buildings of the convent and monastery. Our guide suggested that we should visit the mill first, so we passed the shady cemetery with its rows of wooden crosses. Nuns in scarlet robes made bright gleams of colour amongst the trees as they worked in the convent garden. On the hillside down to the banks of the winding river in the valley below were extensive groves of orange trees and plantations of pineapples and bananas. Although Mariannahill grounds are twelve thousand (12,000) acres in extent, there was no grazing ground and no attempt at dairy-farming, animal food and even butter being forbidden to the brothers. As we drove down a wooded kloof, the soft hill country gave place to grander forest scenery. The road descended between overhanging cliffs, the river winding through the valley widened into miniature lakes, along the banks grew magnificent trees, which were clearly reflected in the still waters below. The noonday stillness, wealth of summer foliage and gleaming waters, wooded hills and valleys lost in dimmest distance, made up a dream of beauty. The vision of the Happy Valley in Rasselas became a lovely reality.

The wagonette drew up at the door of a large building. "Printing-rooms and mill," our guide explained. In the first room we were very much interested in a large printing press, but while we were watching the friars at work, one of them had an eager sign-conversation with our guide. It was quite amusing to watch the rapid gestures and ready understanding of the brothers, but my amusement changed to discomfiture when Brother Crispin sorrowfully informed me that the new Abbot's rule being stricter, ladies were not admitted into the buildings: I might however, he added humorously, look through the windows! Trying, was it not? It is only fair to add, however, that by dint of pleading, and displaying a shabby little notebook and stumpy pencil ("a girl *can* cut a pencil if you give her time enough and pencils enough," was a small boy's scoffing remark), I melted the stern monk's hard heart, and was admitted into all the workshops, only the monastery proper being closed to me. Meanwhile, in rather a discontented mood, I rested outside on a block of wood, and watched the brothers at

work in the garden. "You haf now the best plaisir sitting here," was Brother Crispin's consoling remark. A beautiful little chapel was being built near the mill, all the bricks being made on the premises. On a distant hill rose the red walls of a large native chapel. Most of the Government printing and engraving is done at Mariannhill. Large orders are taken, and many of the brothers are employed setting type, bookbinding, printing, engraving, &c. The machinery is of Italian make, with the latest improvements. Near the printing-room was a large mill for grinding Kafir corn. While F. was inspecting the workrooms, I remained listening to the drone of the press, the tapping of workmen's hammers at the chapel, and the twittering of birds in the sunny garden; then I looked up at the windows. Some of the friars were looking out.

[Interpolation by F.: "No comment here on E.'s curiosity to know whether the friars who had been vouchsafed one glimpse of her would be able to resist the temptation of yet another, but merely the passing allusion to looking up at the windows, and the friars looking out. Strange coincidence! the one touch of simple human nature observable during that visit."]

We drove back to the convent, and alighted at a gate opening on to a sunny courtyard. Brother Crispin rang the bell, and I thought of Mercy at the wicket-gate, when a sweet-faced nun in scarlet robes opened the convent door, and gravely welcomed us. The rules at the convent are apparently less severe than at the monastery; the nuns are evidently allowed to talk. Probably it proved impossible to make women maintain the rule of absolute silence. Then, too, their dress is decidedly picturesque and becoming. They all wear sandals, a scarlet robe with black cape, and blue apron, and a pretty white linen cap. Most of the nuns seemed healthy, energetic women, with fair, German faces, and bright, sympathetic manners.

We waited for a few minutes in the visitors' room, and then a sister came to show us the convent. We passed through a beautiful airy workroom into a little chapel adorned with palms and fair, white lilies. I inquired about the schools, native education on a large scale being carried on at Mariannhill. "Yes, we have eighty girls in training at the convent; £230 per annum is contributed by the Natal Government towards the boys' and girls' schools. Come and see the babies at tea." In a bright, clean room the wee folks were tucking into mealie porridge, and they gaily repented a sort of religious formula in answer to Brother Crispin's greeting when we entered and left the hall. About 200 boys and girls are supported and educated at Mariannhill—800 children altogether at the various Trappist institutions in South Africa. The average training lasts five or six years; work afterwards is voluntary; the pupils may remain at the insti-

tutions or return to their homes. There have been some failures, of course, but Brother Crispin seemed very hopeful as to the children's future usefulness. In another large workroom numbers of girls were busy plaiting hats with great skill; others were darning and knitting. A bright-looking sister presided over a knitting-machine. There were a few white girls, but the majority were natives. All seemed busy and contented. We crossed the ground to another building, and, mounting the steep stairs, entered the sewing-room, where the elder girls were doing the most exquisite work both by machine and hand. There were thirty Pfaff sewing-machines in the room, and all the clothing is made by girls, supervised by the nuns. Brother Crispin told us that the older native girls were better workwomen than Europeans. "As a rule," he added, "natives pick up handicrafts quickly, but book knowledge not so quickly." We visited the dining-room and schoolrooms, all exquisitely clean, stone floors, and plain wooden furniture, the walls whitewashed but decorated with bright pictures. The teaching is carried on in Kafir and English, both of which are foreign languages to the German sisters, and have to be carefully studied. We were amazed at the large dormitory and long rows of beds, a cubicle at each end for the sister in charge. "Why, the chattering must be deafening!" we exclaimed. "There is no chattering in this place." was the calm reply. The children rise at 4.30 a.m. and go to bed between 7.30 and eight p.m. We next visited the large kitchen, where the girls are taught cookery; only wood is burnt, coal not being obtainable. We rested in the sisters' dining-room, a large, airy hall, all the appointments, though plain, being in good taste.

As we left the convent and walked along the shady avenue, several girls who had been busily engaged in field-work, came running up from the garden and mealie plots. Some were romping and shouting gaily, the younger ones playing with skipping-ropes. Their evident enjoyment of work and play, their strong, rapid movements, and look of radiant health and childlike joyousness, were simply delightful. "How happy they seem," I remarked to the sister walking with me. She turned with a surprised look, and then her sweet face lit up with a smile like a sunbeam. "But yes, my child, of course they are happy!" I studied her calm face closely, the soft brown eyes, firm, patient, contented mouth, and expression of grave serenity—"a face like a benediction." Doubtless she and her fellow-workers were learning the great lesson that Paradise is begun on earth whenever self is lost in love, and discontent in submission to the Divine Will.

[Interpolation by F.: "One could not but feel on leaving the convent that under certain conditions and circumstances, brought about maybe by the untoward and sad experiences of earlier years, convent life, such as that of

Mariannahill, freed from the severe austerity generally practised, and situated as the convent is, in the midst of a veritable garden of Eden, is not an undesirable or unhappy one for those craving for a haven of rest from what has been to them a sea of trouble; but for the young, as yet scarcely conscious of what life's joys are, and still in happy ignorance of aught but the lightest of its sorrows. oh, no."

Brother Crispin now led the way to the monastery, huge red-brick buildings, most of which were workshops. He told us there were ten other Trappist stations in the colony. The Mariannahill Monastery was established in 1881. All the members of the community come from Germany.—[F. adds: "And number amongst them men thoroughly capable of designing and executing not only all buildings and works hitherto erected and in progress, but of carrying out and superintending every description of undertaking that is establishing the fame of the institution.""]—There are 150 monks and sixty nuns at Mariannahill, and 300 monks and 230 nuns in the whole colony. The institutions are mainly self-supporting, though, our guide added, they had benefactors in Germany. We first visited the workshop devoted to tanning and leather work. All sorts of saddlery, leggings, &c., are made, and repairs executed. Next came the blacksmith's and wheelwright's shops, near which we saw numbers of strong wagons and ploughs. Indeed the brothers are famous for the strength and neatness of their carriages and other vehicles. The large lofty carpenter's shop proved most interesting. The room was well lighted, at one end stood a large blackboard for illustrations; at the other end a stand held all sorts of tools in shining order. Carriage-building was going on, and in other shops watchmakers, tinsmiths, shoemakers, tailors, &c., were hard at work, in fact every sort of industry seemed to be successfully carried on. It is a noteworthy fact that all the hard manual labour is actually done by the brothers, and they are most successful in teaching trades to the natives and training them in habits of industry. Indeed, the Trappist brothers are doing much to solve, both theoretically and practically, the many problems connected with the large and increasing native population in Natal. Not long after our visit to the monastery we were much interested in a clear and able article on the native question by Fr. Franz Abbot. It appeared in the "Natal Witness," and attracted considerable attention by reason of the clearness of the views set forth, and the sound common sense shown in the practical suggestions for solving some of the problems of the native question.

Having seen all the workshops, our guide asked me to wait in the native church while he took F. to the monastery. The church was a huge shed, closed in on one side, the curtains being drawn up on the other. It reminded one of descriptions of the Israelites' tabernacle.

Narrow wooden benches were arranged in rows on the rough uneven stone floor. Scriptural pictures adorned the walls, and the chancel was elaborately ornamented. It all seemed like a dream as I waited alone in the dim vast oratory. I looked out over the distant hills and enjoyed the cool evening air and intense stillness, while groups of silent brothers passed to and fro, some in dark-brown robes with leather belts and sandals, others in light-brown robes with black scapulas. Presently one of the brothers approached the shed and began beckoning and signing to me. One felt irresistibly inclined to make signs in return instead of asking what he wanted, however, after puzzling a minute, I concluded that Brother Crispin had sent for me, so I followed the silent friar to the monastery church, where, sure enough, F. was waiting with our guide. Unfortunately the bell was tolling for vespers, so we had no time to thoroughly study the really lovely church. One carried away a beautiful memory of a dim lofty building with carved pillars and vaulting arches. Exquisite paintings adorned the walls, and the windows were of finest grained glass. The church and all the other monastery buildings were designed by Brother Nivart Steicher, engineer and architect to the community. We were fortunate in meeting Brother Nivart, a monk with a fair, refined face, clear grey eyes, and singularly bright expression. Being one of the travelling friars, he was of course exempt from the vow of silence, and talked in a bright, interesting way, with plenty of quiet humour. We had heard him spoken of in Maritzburg as a very able man, and found him very delightful. It seemed hard to realise that the quiet, modest young monk, clad in brown robe and sandals, was really a clever practical engineer and designer of all those great buildings, in fact, he seemed to be the genius of the community.

On our way to the boys' schools, F. started an argument with our guide with regard to the vows of silence. "What is the use of condemning a man to perpetual silence?" asked F. "Den he has de more time to tink" (like the parrot?). "dere is also no quarrelling, but a steady peace," was Brother Crispin's prompt reply. "But does this not tend to weaken and crush the monk's intellectual life?" Our guide somewhat humely argued that intellect was not needed by the majority of the brothers. The Trappists, he maintained, were a working community, a few must lead and think for the many who had to be led, and the latter had no need to develop their mental faculties, their duty was to submit to their superiors, and be content with the things within their reach.

Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp, Or what's a heaven for!

I listened to Brother Crispin's explanations in amused silence, and no longer wondered at the want of animation and cheerfulness so pain-

fully noticeable among the monks. Father Wilhelm and the two friars, Crispin and Nivart, all of whom were freed from the vow of silence, were the only *alert*, cheerful men in the community. The rest of the brethren presented a dejected, limp appearance; many looked half dazed. I thought the good friar's argument quite wrong, and think too that he was arguing against his own inward convictions. The keenest pathos of life lies in the sense of wasted forces and repressed energies. The truest happiness lies in the unselfish living out of one's inner powers, the daily strengthening of one's highest faculties, the harmonious development of

The inward forces which from God do flow,

Which with a Father's love He unto men has given.

That by their means they may upraise themselves to heaven.

But our thoughts turned to more practical matters as we inspected the hospital and boys' dormitories and dining-rooms. The boys were at supper, juniors and seniors in separate rooms, with a friar in charge of each table. We were amused at their appetites for mealie bread and porridge. The older boys were allowed as much as they liked, the little ones, Brother Crispin laughingly explained, only one large basin of porridge and a hunch of bread. I should add that the monks in no way fared better than the children under their charge. Their dormitory arrangements, wooden beds and rough blankets, are exactly the same, and they share the same coarse but wholesome food. The schoolrooms, which we were told were daily filled with about 130 boys, were clean and well ventilated. The furniture strong and the appliances efficient. We noticed several excellent maps, including Stanley's map of the Congo basin. The Abbot's charter, illuminated in scarlet and blue and gold, brightened the white-washed wall. From the Government Inspector's report for 1892 I noted the instruction in industries as follows: "Boys—Tailoring, shoemakers, masons, wheelwrights, blacksmiths, tinsmiths, painting, carpentry, printing, and saddlery. Girls—All sewing, knitting, washing, ironing, cooking, basket-work, house and fieldwork, &c. Yearly grant, £100 (increased under Responsible Government); recipient of grant, Right Rev. Franz Abbot; six European teachers; no native or other contributions in aid of school. Attendance—Under twelve years of age, boys 51, girls 68; over twelve years of age, boys 44, girls 17; total, 180; average attendance, 163; number of school-days in year, 266." After leaving the schoolrooms we mounted the hill on which stood the monastery proper. A priest in a white robe and black scapula crossed the courtyard, and introduced himself as Father Wilhelm. He courteously apologised for not seeing us before as it was his duty to act as chief guide to visitors, but being very busy, he had asked Brother Crispin to undertake his duty. Father Wilhelm

was carrying a small brown teapot and plate of bread. He said the tea had "drawn," and we must be needing some supper. Our guide was anxious for F. to do some more sight-seeing.—[F. adds: "Viz., to view the dormitory and dining-room of the friars, which are exact counterparts in every particular of the apartments allotted to the scholars, severe in their simplicity, and yet amply adequate for the maintenance of health and hardy comfort."}]—Meanwhile I waited in the visitors' refectory, and had a chat with Father Wilhelm while he set the table. The refectory was a charming little room, and the beautifully-carved sideboard would have roused any housewife's envious admiration. The top part had glass doors, so one had a good view of the dainty china and shining glass. I admired the deft way in which the good friar set about preparing supper, while he courteously answered all my eager questions, keeping a watchful eye on the small brown teapot. Observing my notebook, he anxiously asked, "You will speak kindly of Brother Crispin?" I gently assented in somewhat pained surprise that he should think I could say aught but kind, grateful words of the good brother who had so unselfishly sought to promote our happiness and comfort throughout the day. Father Wilhelm explained that some former visitors had criticised Brother Crispin's manner somewhat severely. "He has a good heart," he added, "and it is not his fault that he is not so polished; speak kindly of him." We have none but kindly memories of good Brother Crispin, who, in his unvarying courtesy, thoughtful consideration for others, and generosity in praising his fellow-workers, proved himself to be a true Christian gentleman, finding ever his highest and best self in utter and complete unselfishness. Just then F. came in quite ready for supper. The tea-table looked most inviting with its spotless linen and dainty china, kept specially for visitors. The tea was brewed to perfection, so the friar's anxiety was relieved: we enjoyed the fresh eggs and bananas, homemade bread and golden honey. There were numbers of hives we were told, and 600 lb. of honey were exported yearly to Johannesburg and Pretoria, also large quantities of tamarind wine, resembling cider. Through the open door we watched the monks filing into church, while Father Wilhelm described their daily life. The novices, he said, wore white gowns and brown aprons for two years; when they entered the choir they wore black scapulas. The teachers and priests wore white robes with black scapulas, and were known as the "White Monks." The monks in black or dark-brown robes were lay brothers, working as carpenters, labourers, &c. All wear sandals, but the monks who travel about the country, doing the business of the community, are allowed rough, heavy boots and felt or coarse straw hats. The harmonium sounded faintly, but it was

only used for the benefit of the natives, we were told, the Trappists not being allowed to use any music or elaborate ritual in their services. The monks rise at two a.m. and go into church. At three a.m. the brown-frocked lay brothers go out to do kitchen work and to study Kafir. The white monks remain till nearly six, praying and singing psalms. At 4.30 the lay brothers return to mass, remaining in church till 5.30, when they go to breakfast and afterwards to the workshops. The white monks finish their office at 6.30, when they have breakfast and study for the priesthood. They are examined by the Bishop in theology, philosophy, &c. Reading is allowed, *i.e.* devotional books, no newspapers or fiction. The guides who travel about, and who are exempt from the vow of silence, are obliged to confine their conversation strictly to business, and may bring no news of the outside world to their brethren. Dinner is at twelve, and from 12.30 to 1.30 reading is allowed. Supper is at five p.m., one of the brothers reading a devotional book aloud from 5.30 to 6.10. Service at 6.30, though, of course, the friars go to church seven times

daily to "say their office." A strange life, and I was trying to realise it all, dreamily picturing the silent monks filing into the dim, cold church in the dark hour before the dawn, while the night mists lay in the low valleys, praying and chanting psalms till sunrise gilded the distant hills—when Brother Crispin cheerily called out that he was waiting in the wagonette to drive us to the station in order to catch the evening train to Durban. As we drove away, we met several friars returning from field work. We turned for a last look at Mariannhill Monastery; the massive red buildings looked mellowed and softened in the evening light, on the hillside cemetery a nun in scarlet robes was slowly pacing to and fro among the wooden crosses, at the monastery door Father Wilhelm stood gravely smiling his farewell, quiet peace and restfulness brooded over all. It seemed indeed that to the good brothers had come the gladness and peace of the Golden Year.

For well I know
That unto him who works, and feels he works,
This same grand year is ever at the doors.



5.—ROUND ABOUT DURBAN—MOUNT EDGECUMBE AND BELLAIR.

In the sunshine, by the shady verge of woods,
By the sweet waters where the wild dove sips.—

Richard Jeffries.

The shades of night were falling on the Berea hills when we reached Durban after our visit to Pinetown. Not yet thoroughly familiar with Natal ways and customs we sent for a cab, and were rather surprised when two rickshas pulled by stalwart Kafirs appeared on the platform. However, we managed to stow our luggage into one and ourselves into another, and set off for the Alexandra Hotel, the runners pulling us smoothly and swiftly along the Point road through the gathering darkness. Ti welcomed "leetle Missy" with a beaming countenance, and a long night's rest was very refreshing after the jolting and shaking up we had enjoyed with Brother Crispin as charioteer over the Trappist roads.

Days of delicious idling followed, loitering along the Berea lanes, or resting under the shady trees in the Park on the shores of the Umbilo. One afternoon we sailed over to the Bluff and climbed the steep road to the lighthouse. We lingered long there, looking across the lagoon to the fair city of Durban, and the green hills and gleaming river beyond. Below us were some rocky caves worn by the waves of the Indian Ocean. We found the steamy heat of Durban very trying, and were quite ready to agree with our friends who told us it was wiser to visit Natal during the dry, bracing winter months. It was delicious to escape from the hot city, and sail across the lagoon and catch the faint breeze from the hills. The Mayor of Durban, wise man, has built a charming cottage on a raft in the lagoon, it has a railed-in flat roof and a long verandah—fore and aft—and is within easy sailing distance of the shore. F. revelled in these sails, but was aggrieved at the lack of herons and seagulls, and also pined for the society of flamingoes and pelicans. Some people are never satisfied. We were interested in watching the dredging operations on the bar in connection with the harbour works, but I must refrain from making any remarks about them, because F. sarcastically hints that it is easy to get out of one's depth in Durban Harbour.

[Note by F.: "What strikes the casual observer most with regard to the harbour works at Natal, as compared with other ports along the coast, is that the Natalians appear to have got much more for their money than East London, The Kowie, or Port Elizabeth, that less has been

expended on experimental engineering, and that a well-thought-out plan is being thoroughly and successfully carried out and adhered to. There was a continuous depth of from fifteen to sixteen feet on the bar during our stay at Durban, and the inhabitants were naturally very jubilant about it. The facilities for the discharge of cargo, storing, and rapidity of shipment are already admirable, and I understand that the line of wharf is about to be considerably extended. I spent many hours watching the working of the magnificent hydraulic cranes, and noting the celerity with which loading and discharge of ships and steamers was carried out, and the care taken to prevent damage to cases. Cape Town in these respects may take a very back seat indeed, with all her boasted dock accommodation." One morning we explored the Botanic Gardens on the Berea. We were rather disappointed at the poor show of flowers, but the gardens are very tropical, and we were charmed with the wealth of rare foliage and tree-ferns. Another day we visited the Japanese Fair, where a lively auction sale was going on. Huge tent umbrellas hung from the ceiling; there were quantities of hideous jars, quaint curios, gaudy fans, and vases and ornaments of every size, shape, and hue. The room was filled with a motley crowd—European visitors and innumerable Natalians, Hindoos in flowing white robes, coolie girls in gorgeous array, and the usual crowd of grinning natives. Having made a few purchases we were glad to escape from the hot and odorous atmosphere.

Of course we could not leave Natal without visiting one of the sugar plantations, so we arranged to spend a day at Mount Edgecumbe and go over the Central Sugar Mills. Mount Edgecumbe is on the Verulam line, which passes through the tropical coast scenery, so we found the journey very lovely, and gazed with wondering delight at the woodlands starred with flowers and entangled with creepers. But our day at the mills was most unpleasant, the mud was truly horrible, and no wonder, since forty inches of rain had fallen in three months. We stuck fast several times on our way from the station, but managed to wade through a sea of muddy trouble and reach the mills. When we got inside I thought the heated treacly atmosphere worse than the mud outside. The roar and whirl of the machinery was most deafening and confusing. I tried hard to listen to the intelligent engineer's explanations—and understood? Not a bit. However, those

who are interested in the process of refining sugar, &c., will find full information in that interesting and exciting little volume called "The Child's Guide to Knowledge," it deals with many problems, from "Pray, what is bread made of?" to the number of robes in Queen Elizabeth's wardrobe, it unravels the legends which have gathered round many inventions and discoveries, describes also the formation of pearls and diamonds, and the composition of mummies and sauerkraut, &c. The antiquated but amusing little text-book is well worth perusal on a dull winter day. The sugar-cane was being brought to the mill in huge trams and carts. The cane takes from eighteen months to two years to ripen, and in the intervals of planting fresh cane, molasses are sown, the refuse cane being used for fuel. The crushing is done by a check roller, so that the amount of sugar due to a planter can be approximated. It reminded me of an old country custom in flour mills. When the poorer country women bring corn to be ground the miller asks, "Will ye pay it or toll it?" If the old dame agrees to toll it the tolling-dish is dipped into the flour, and the amount it contains is the miller's due as payment. Well, at Mount Edgecumbe, when the treacle tank is full after the cane has been crushed, its density is taken, and according to the tonnage of the cane the overseer can tell how much sugar per acre (approximately to two or three pounds) is due to the planter.

We were amused at the huge tanks of treacle. The liquid boils from twelve to twenty hours, and as it grows thicker of course the grain gets bigger. The engineer dipped glass slides into various boiling liquids to explain the varying density and show us the grain in process of formation. Three sorts of sugar are made at the mills — white, yellow, and coarse treacle sugar. We were surprised at being told that the white sugar was really the purest, as the crystallised yellow variety is chemically treated. It was odd to watch the coarse liquid being poured into machines and after a few moments' whirring come pouring out in the form of yellow or white grained sugar. Next season a manager from Demerara is coming out to superintend the making of treacle and loaf sugar. I soon got tired of watching "the wheels go round," and the crowds of Indian workmen passing and repassing laden with bags of sugar or buckets of treacle. The dull roar of machinery and heavy atmosphere were decidedly trying too, so we were relieved when the engineer led the way upstairs to a cooler atmosphere. I thought of several dear wee maidens busy in a schoolroom far away in Cape Town who would certainly have thought they had stepped into a living fairy tale had they been there to see the huge mounds of yellow, white, and brown sugar, with a spade and wheelbarrow ready to cart it all away!

After leaving the main building, we were shown a treacle reservoir 30 feet deep. The

wee folks would have ceased to envy little Alice of the inquiring turn of mind had they been privileged to peep into the depths of that treacle well. For my own part, I was always inclined to doubt the Dormouse's veracity and to fear he had been visited with sweet visions during his frequent naps, when he romanced to Alice about the three little sisters who lived in a well. "What did they live on?" said Alice, who always took a great interest in questions of eating and drinking.

"They lived on treacle," said the Dormouse, after thinking a minute or two.

"They couldn't have done that you know," Alice gently remarked: "they'd have been ill."

"So they were," said the Dormouse: "very ill."

Alice's next query was, "Why did they live at the bottom of a well?" The Dormouse again took a minute or two to think about it, and then said, "It was a treacle well."

"There's no such thing!" Alice began, very angrily, but was promptly hushed while the Dormouse proceeded to state that the three little sisters were learning to draw, you know. "What did they draw?" said Alice. "Treacle," said the Dormouse, without considering at all this time. Alice cautiously tried again. "But I don't understand. Where did they draw the treacle from?" The Hatter interrupted with crushing logic, "You can draw water out of a water-well, so I should think you could draw treacle out of a treacle-well—eh, stupid?" "But they were *in* the well," Alice argued. "Of course they were," said the Dormouse; "well in." And poor puzzled little Alice gave up in despair!

Vividly did I recall a warm midsummer afternoon in a distant schoolroom, and the rows of eager little ones with wondering eyes and parted lips, following Alice through the fairy realms of fancy, while sewing and knitting slipped from small hot hands, because the needles were so sticky that they would *not* push through! Afterwards several of the little listeners confided to me that they really thought the Dormouse and Mock Turtle had been telling "pretend stories." It was a satisfaction to know that at any rate the Dormouse's memory could be cleared of the grave charge that he told "pretend stories," and it was *quite* true that a treacle-well really did exist!

[This reminds F. of the punishment awarded to an insolent employé who was at work in the building where treacle is stored. Having ventured to advance an opinion at variance with some order that had been given him, and to argue the point, summary justice was dealt him, which took this form, that he was promptly pitched headforemost into about five feet of treacle, and left there some time to enjoy himself on the sweets of life.]

The engineer told us that the frequent sudden thunderstorms were very destructive, and a recent whirlwind had taken off the roofs

of sheds in four seconds. Three thousand hands are employed on the sugar plantations and in the mills, 2,800 being Indians. The Kafirs, our guide added, were very lazy, and would not do quarter of the work easily accomplished by Indians. The central mill is comparatively new, having been built only three years ago, but the original sugar mills were started thirty or thirty-five years ago. The central estate consists of 2,500 acres: there are other adjoining estates, on which new mills are to be started, and, of course, the profits are enormous. We were interested in hearing that the present millowner started as a workman on the estate. Work seems to be pretty constant all the year round, planting, cutting, crushing, and boiling going on with uniform regularity: the working hours in the mill are rather long, as the overseers start crushing at one a.m. and leave off at six p.m.: the sugar is boiled at night, the electric light being used. It was all very interesting and I felt a wee bit ashamed of murmuring "How thankful should we be," to F. when we wearily wended our way to the station.

[Note by F.: "No, we did not go direct to the station. It is only fair to future visitors to Mount Edgecumbe, to inform them that on casting my eye over the surrounding neighbourhood I had discovered a snug little hostelry where we might obliterate all traces of what we had gone through. For myself I confess that satisfying as sugarcane and treacle are in their way, I desired an amalgam with those articles of diet, and needed some refreshment as a restorative after the tax on my ingenuity in the concoction and utterance of phrases expressive of my unqualified admiration at everything we had seen."] The engineer presented us with some specimens of cane and a parcel of sugar, and we were grateful for his kindness and attention throughout the day, though I could not sacrifice truth for politeness by adding the customary remark—"Such a *very* pleasant day." Indeed, I felt unwonted sympathy for that small boy who reluctantly went to a tea party, and at the end of an afternoon's misery bade farewell to his hostess, and with tear-stained, disconsolate face, conscientiously added that his mama told him to say he had enjoyed himself very much!

Having done our duty in learning all about sugar (?) at Mount Edgecumbe, I suggested to F. that a long idle day at Bellair would be very pleasant, and he (as usual) agreed. Bellair is a lovely suburb a few miles from Durban, and it was a bright, beautiful morning when we left the hot, crowded city, and in half an hour alighted at a quiet little wayside station. A notice of church services hung inside the station, and F. became quite excited when he saw the Rector's signature, as he recognised the name of an old friend, formerly Rector of S. Mark's, Cape Town. We set out to search for the Rectory, asking the way from

several passers-by, each of whom gave a different direction, so we raced about up and down the hills and through the winding muddy lanes, until at length we reached a newly-built Rectory. It was a charming little house perched on the summit of a hill, and commanding magnificent views of the surrounding country. "The Rector has good taste," I remarked, "but where is he?" Alas! he had not yet moved in, and every door and window was firmly closed. I had had enough of the wanderings of Ulysses, and flatly declined to continue our meanderings until we had rested, so we finally encamped in the back yard, had our lunch, and rested on a packing-case.

Afterwards we succeeded in finding the Rector's lodgings: his landlady welcomed us with a beaming countenance, and insisted on preparing breakfast immediately.

"Breakfast, lunch, breakfast *again*; really it's something like the March Hare's tea-party," I hinted to F., but we were hot and tired, so found the tea and bananas very refreshing. Meanwhile the landlady, a bright, energetic Englishwoman not long out from the Home country, chatted pleasantly. The Rector, she said, had gone to a native wedding at Um—something, and she discoursed about his perfections, and the iniquities of the native servants. The servant question is a constant source of grievance with Natal housekeepers, and "cooks' stories" abound. But, indeed, the trials of the poor housewives seem many and varied, European servants are seldom to be obtained, and the constant inflow of imported Indian labour is becoming a serious question; as to the Kafirs—well, we heard many conflicting opinions. In their neat holland or dark-blue uniforms the Kafir boys look very tidy and satisfactory servants, but mistresses tell a different tale: the constant complaint being that a boy comes from a kraal utterly untaught and clumsy, and after the mistress has exercised constant care and patience, and has trained the lad to be a useful servant, he runs away and returns to his native home. Then when Indian servants are employed, they bring their wives and families along with them. The mistress of a Berea villa with small garden attached, told me that two Indian families were encamped on the "estate," and she was reduced to ordering her groceries three times a week to prevent thieving. (The latter method of housekeeping is comparatively easy, however, as there is a perfect network of telephonic communication between the Berea residences and business houses in the city.) So after all we are comparatively well off at the Cape.

It was getting rather late, so F. left a note for the Rector, and we wandered down the lanes again, meeting several of the native wedding guests returning from the festivities. Bellair is a most lovely locality: the innumerable hills—some of them cultivated, others

covered with waving grass of varying shades of green—seem just tumbled about in all directions. The lanes are deep and shadowy, and tall, close jasmine hedges several feet high form regular walls of dark green leaves starred with white waxen blossoms. Bellair is evidently a favourite suburban resort, for there are hundreds of pretty cottages and villa residences in the lanes and on the hillsides. The gardens that morning were gay with roses and lilies, sun-flowers and the great scarlet flowers of the hibiscus rosea; the bougainvillea was growing in wonderful luxuriance over the cottage verandahs and roofs. The cool lanes and grassy terraces, with rustic seats placed in shady corners, looked most inviting, and numbers of children were playing on the grass or swinging under the trees.

The lot had fallen unto us in a fair ground that day, I remarked to F., as we wandered down a winding path through the waving grass. Indeed, "the earth and common face of nature spake to us memorable things," as we revelled in the lovely sights and sounds of that bright spring morning. Cloud shadows swept across the valleys, the warm drowsy wind murmured in the hollows of the hills, the "lily-muffled hum of summer bees" came to us from the cottage gardens, and we heard the distant flow of the Umbilo River in a cluster of trees below. Following the sound, we soon reached a bend in the stream, and sat down to rest on the banks. It was indeed a fair spot. There was a thick, dark forest opposite, and we could hear the birds twittering in the leafy groves—rather an unusual sound in Natal. Overhead was a break of tender blue in the dull, grey sky, the long reeds swayed and bent as the river flowed on its quiet way, white butterflies flitted by, birds called from the distant woods, and we rested on the shelving bank entirely happy and content. F. soon thought it time for lunch number two, and I was so hot and thirsty after our long walk, that the river water seemed especially tempting, but F. cruelly remarked that the recent heavy rains had doubtless brought down some miniature crocodiles and alligators. Little Alice's nursery rhyme which *wouldn't* come right arose irresistibly in one's memory:

How doth the little crocodile
Improve his shining tail,
And pour the waters of the Um——
On every golden scale.

[Note by F.: "E. is quite right. It was all she pictures it to be, and I really felt a halo of romance encircling me, but when you realise that all day you have been carrying the lunch basket you do feel at times that you should lose no reasonable opportunity of getting it lightened or at least getting the weight distributed. Inequalities are distressing to me. N.B.—Tourists should carefully abstain from partaking of the waters of the Umbilo when in flood,

These and other waters may suit the hardy constitutions of the wild doves who sip them, as Jefferies avers; but I take leave to doubt it."]

The afternoon soon slipped by, and we reluctantly wended our way back to the station. The clear evening light brought out fresh beauties of form and hue in the surrounding scenery, and we were able to get a good view of most of the kraals and scattered huts on the distant hills.

That bright day at Bellair was, alas, the last of our expeditions, for days of pouring rain alternating with intense steamy heat set in, and we dared not venture further than for a ramble on the Berea or a sail on the lagoon. We whiled away a good deal of time in the library, but in literary matters Natal must take a very back seat indeed compared with Cape Town. Indeed in many ways the libraries in Durban and Maritzburg are inferior to those found in many up-country villages in Cape Colony. For instance, in Durban library an alcove is set apart for ladies; it is furnished with a table, a few chairs, and a filter, the sole literary refreshment provided consisting of copies of the "Queen" and other fashion papers. No magazines or papers of any interest could be obtained at the railway bookstalls; only shilling shockers and comic papers. Even in private houses we noticed the lack of interesting books and magazines. Few topics of outside interest were discussed. We tried hard but unsuccessfully to get copies of the "Cape Times," and were in utter ignorance (except through the medium of private letters) as to how matters were progressing in the "Old Colony" during our absence. There were no notices of lectures, debating societies, &c., in the Natal papers; as a rule, only topics of merely local interest were touched upon, and we much feared that Dr. Kolbe would get but a scanty audience at an extension lecture!

We shall not readily forget the merciless heat we endured the day we left Durban, and the tug journey from the wharf, over the bar, to the Scot seemed cruelly and needlessly long. It was late in the afternoon when the Scot steamed away, and we took a last glimpse at the Bluff lighthouse and the green hills encircling the fair city of Durban. A lovely evening followed the glowing sunset, and we sat late on deck enjoying the cool night air as we passed along the coast.—[F.'s thoughts: "As I lay back in my deck-chair, and in mind bade farewell to lovely Natal, I communed with myself as to what my notes should be in the 'Comments on Natal' which E. and I had arranged were to be a combined effort, how lightly I might touch on faults and failings in institutions or inhabitants without wounding sensibilities, how cordially and warmly I could speak of the kindness shown to us, entire strangers as we were, and how language would fail even E. (and this is her department entirely) in fitly portraying the varied

beauties of the country as they were revealed to us. If we have succeeded in interesting our readers and affording them any hints of value should they desire to spend a similar enjoyable holiday to ours, we shall be amply recompensed."]

Overhead was a clear starlit sky, and we looked out across the heaving waves to the

distant shadowy hills. Homeward bound at last, for every moment was bringing us nearer to Table Mountain, and it was with the old familiar words, uttered so often in jest, that we bade farewell to Natal, as I turned to F. and he answered my unspoken thought, "How thankful should we be."





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